

# Drive away those winter blues!

by Jetta Fonkert

Well, it's that time of year again; the feeling that you have endured through months of long dark nights, lots of snow that sooner rather than later melts, followed by colder than comfortable temperatures (did I really bring the cold from Fairbanks . . . ?) Sure we're gaining daylight but are we going to make it until spring? Have you found yourself having any of the following symptoms?

- inactivity
- weight gain
- social withdrawal
- sleep disturbance
- itchy scalp (oh wait, that's just the dry climate)

"Oh No!" you exclaim. Yup, the statistics are there, my friends. So now what? Well, experts around the world agree that light therapy in sufficient intensity and time is an important component in the successful treatment of the winter blues. But who wants to sit in front of a lamp for more than 2 minutes? Boring... What you need to do is drive away those winter blues!

## Ranger Jetta's Top 10 Cures for the Common Fever Caused by Cabins:

- 10. Drive up Ski Hill Road to the Visitor Center (Refuge Headquarters) and take a look around. Pick up something from the Alaska Geographic sales outlet for the out-of-town relative that you've been trying to drag up here for the past 30 years.
- 9. Check out one of the movies played every Saturday at the Visitor Center starting at noon. Discover parrots and giant otters in the Peruvian rain forest of "Manu," playing March 1st. Movies play at noon, 1, 2, 3, and 4 pm. You can always call the Refuge for a movie schedule.
- 8. Bring your galoshes and hike the 2.2 mile Centennial Trail located at the Visitor Center.

- 7. Grab your cross-country skis and check out the 30 plus miles of ski trails also located at the Visitor Center. Decide what trail you want to take and drag the family or invite a friend. Now is the time while there's still snow!
- 6. Find your snowshoes or winter boots and check out Seven Lakes Trail. The trail provides good snowshoeing and skiing opportunities and the trailheads are located at Kelly Lake Campground (along the Sterling Highway) and Engineer Lake Campground (mile 9.4 from the east entrance of Skilak Lake Road).
- 5. Load up the snowmachines and take a blast through the Caribou Hills (make sure you know where your going, what the regulations are and what the weather conditions are like. Call the Refuge for info and maps).
- 4. Grab a few buddies or pack up the kids and head out to Engineer Lake for some ice fishing action.
- 3. Grab the shotguns and hunt grouse or ptarmigan (open season is August 1– May 15 and bag limits for both is 10 per day; see page 109 of Alaska's hunting regulations for more info).
- 2. Go for the fur and set up that trap line you've always wanted to do (be sure you have a trapping license and follow trapping regulations; you also need to take the trapping and/or snaring class offered every fall at Refuge Headquarters prior to trapping or snaring on the Refuge.)
- 1. Rent a public use cabin for the weekend for maximum winter fun! Don't forget plenty of food and cooking utensils, cross-country skis, snowshoes, ice fishing gear, hiking boots, and whatever else you might need for a weekend full of fresh air, sunlight, and all the wonders of the outdoors.

If this doesn't drive away your winter blues, you need a more intense dose of sunlight. Try Maui . . .

Call the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters at 262-7021 for more information on winter activities.

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